

NEWS



More than \$580,000 to help protect and restore Delaware Bay and watershed

Washington – Oct. 1, 2004 – As part of the 2004 Delaware Coast Day celebration on October 3, Delaware Estuary Program Director Kathy Klein and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Executive Director John Berry will announce the commitment of \$581,100 to 31 local groups working to restore living resources and water quality in the 6,000-square-mile Delaware Estuary. These grants will leverage an additional \$1.9 million in contributions from project partners.

In its second year, the Delaware Estuary Grants Program offers funding to organizations working in Delaware, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, three states that share the land and water of this magnificent resource. The grants encourage citizen stewardship in local watersheds intended to improve the health of the entire estuary. Another important program goal is to strengthen the link between communities and the Delaware Estuary Program.

Activities supported by the grants include wetland and stream restoration, riparian plantings and land conservation, as well as the development and implementation of community watershed management plans and other water quality improvement strategies.

Major funding for the second year of grant awards is provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the BP Foundation. Additional funding is provided by the William Penn Foundation, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, ConocoPhillips and the Fairplay Foundation.

All projects address action items from the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for the Delaware Estuary, which makes recommendations for improving land use, water use, water quality, habitat and the living resources in the estuary. Applications are reviewed by a panel of state and federal agencies.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is a nonprofit organization established by Congress in 1984 and dedicated to the conservation of fish, wildlife and plants, and the habitat on which they depend. The Foundation creates partnerships between the public and private sectors to strategically invest in conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources. The Foundation distributed 687 grants in 2003 and has leveraged \$261 million in federal funds since its establishment, for a total of more than \$786 million in on-the-ground conservation. This year, the Foundation celebrates its 20th anniversary.

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The Delaware Estuary Program is a partnership organized in 1988 to develop and implement plans for the protection and enhancement of the Delaware Estuary. It is organized and funded primarily by the US EPA, the states of Delaware and New Jersey, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, the Delaware River basin Commission and the City of Philadelphia in collaboration with many other agencies and organizations that share an interest in maintaining the ecosystem and the associated economic and recreation opportunities.

Statements from Regional Leaders on the Announcement of the 2004 Delaware Estuary Grants

Statement from Delaware Estuary Program and the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, Inc. Director Kathy Klein

“These grants are fantastic since they help a wide variety of community groups, schools, non-profit organizations, and local governments to implement projects that protect natural resources and increase public awareness of the positive connections between our economy, our quality of life, and the watersheds we call home.”

Statement from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Executive Director John Berry

“The Delaware Estuary is truly a national treasure for wildlife and for people. The estuary contains habitat for migratory shorebirds, commercial and recreational fish species, extensive oyster reefs, vast tidal marsh and the largest horseshoe crab population in the world. It also is home to more than six million people who depend on its clean water for drinking, industrial uses and recreation.”

Statement from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Director for the Northeast Marvin Moriarty

“This grant program will enhance partnership efforts to protect and conserve important fish and wildlife habitats in the Delaware Estuary and complement habitats currently protected by the National Wildlife Refuge System and State Natural Resource Areas.”

Statement from NOAA Fisheries Assistant Administrator Dr. Bill Hogarth

“NOAA Fisheries is proud to support the Delaware Estuary Grants Program with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. This Program is a model for building on-the-ground, community-based partnerships for conservation of the nation’s valuable coastal resources.”

Statement from BP America, Inc. president Ross Pillari

"The BP Foundation is pleased to be a major sponsor of the Delaware Estuary Grants Program. We're proud that the projects funded through this program will have a sustaining effect that leads to continuing improvement in the environmental and ecological health of the estuary."

Statement from Delaware Natural Resources and Environmental Control Secretary John Hughes

“The Delaware Estuary is a vital natural resource and Governor Minner and I are proud to support this important restoration and conservation partnership effort. Funding these kinds of projects is essential to improving the overall health of the Delaware River and Bay. On behalf of the Minner Administration, I encourage our community organizations, watershed groups and local governments to continue to work with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, the Delaware Estuary and DNREC to restore water quality and wildlife habitat in local watersheds that drain into the Delaware Estuary.”

Statement from Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Kathleen A. McGinty

“Pennsylvania welcomes the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation as a valued partner in implementing the Delaware Estuary Program’s goals of watershed protection, habitat restoration and water quality improvement. The Foundation’s program helps move important tri-state priorities from the planning phase to realization. It’s also a nice complement to Pennsylvania’s Growing Greener and Energy Harvest grant programs, and a perfect example of the innovative ways we can address pressing environmental issues by partnering with local communities in restoration projects.”

Statement from Delaware River Basin Commission Executive Director Carol R. Collier

“We’re seeing improvements in the overall health of the estuary. Involving the local communities is key to achieving our shared goal of healthier ecosystems, stronger communities and a more vibrant economy. We can have all three.”

Statement from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 2 Environmental Planning and Protection Division Director Walter Mugdan

“The Delaware Estuary is one of the great natural treasures of our region, and the beneficiary of work done by the concerned citizens of its border states. These grants, and the additional funding they will help leverage, are essential in enabling people and organizations to participate fully in the continued care and protection of the Estuary.”

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For more information including a list of grants, please contact:

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- Or visit www.nfwf.org/programs/delawareawards.htm or www.delawareestuary.org